

U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Jamilya Saddiya Vann, age 20, of Eastville, Virginia, was sentenced to 135 months in federal prison in the U.S. District Court in Norfolk today on charges of possessing more than five grams of crack cocaine with intent to distribute, and possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon. Vann was arrested on a federal complaint in Accomack County in June 2004. She pled guilty in September 2004.

The original federal charge of possession of more than five grams of crack cocaine arose out of arrests of Vann, Dion Smith, and James Banks on March 19, 2003, in Northampton County. Vann initially faced cocaine and marihuana related state charges in Accomack County. The case was referred for federal prosecution under Project EXILE/Project Safe neighborhood (PSN). Vann fled from state authorities in October 2003, and remained a fugitive with Thomas Lee Reid of Belle Haven until June 2004. Reid had been the principal drug dealer with whom Vann, Smith, and Banks were associated. Reid was also wanted on a federal criminal complaint and arrest warrant. When federal and local agents attempted to serve the arrest warrant on Reid in June 2004, he fatally shot himself. Shortly thereafter Vann was arrested. At the time she was arrested she was in possession of a loaded pistol. Smith and Banks were earlier prosecuted by federal authorities and are currently serving 151 months and 180 months respectively.

Vann and others were involved in the distribution of powder cocaine, crack cocaine, and marihuana. At the time of the arrests by State Police and agents of the Eastern Shore Drug Task Force, officers seized over 47 grams of crack, 415 grams of powder cocaine, 22 pounds of marihuana, and \$14,700.

Project EXILE/PSN is a multi-agency joint federal and state task force targeting armed criminals for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. It is a part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide effort by the Department of Justice aimed at reducing violent crimes. Since its inception in Hampton Roads in late 1997, Project EXILE has produced 928 convictions and removed over 1646 firearms from armed criminals.

The charges against Vann were investigated by the Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, and agents and task force agents working with the Virginia State Police and the Eastern Shore Drug Task Force. The case was prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe.

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